

SRTS News, May 2007: Encouraging Safe Bicycling and Walking to School

Schools Organize for First Round of Funding

Communities throughout the Granite State are recognizing the many benefits of **safe walking and bicycling to school**.

Burning calories instead of gasoline, reducing traffic jams in school zones, and improving air quality are the potential benefits of the New Hampshire **Safe Routes to School** (NHSRTS) initiative administered by the state Department of Transportation (NHDOT).

May promises to be a busy month for the program. More communities are beginning the planning process while the department prepares for the first round of funding.

NHDOT invites anyone interested in NHSRTS to comment on draft funding criteria that have been posted on our Web site. The department anticipates issuing a first request for proposals in the near future.

The criteria are designed to be as flexible as possible. NHDOT wants to ensure that the Granite State's share of federal SRTS funding encourages the maximum number of students in kindergarten through

eighth grade to safely walk or bicycle to school.

Communities that develop plans addressing the “**5Es**” of the NHSRTS planning process – **evaluation, encouragement, education, enforcement, and engineering** - will receive the highest scores.

As reported in the April NHSRTS newsletter, planning efforts are well underway in Nashua, Concord and Lebanon. Initial meetings have also been held in **Gorham, Gilford and Warren**. In addition to follow-up sessions, May meetings have been scheduled in **Charlestown, Keene, Portsmouth, Troy, Strafford, and Tufonboro**.

Cities and towns that have not yet returned the preliminary school survey form (available on the Web site or by contacting the NHSRTS coordinator) may submit them at any time. Although this has not been proposed as a requirement, communities that form active planning task forces and develop strong plans will have a competitive advantage when applying for funding.

Communities are encouraged to be creative in seeking Safe Routes funding. Successful applications will

likely cover everything from initial planning and survey work to infrastructure projects.

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